

Kindergarten Informative/Explanatory Writing: Navigating Informational Text Features

Instructional Unit Resource for the
*South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for
English Language Arts*

South Carolina Department of Education
Office of Standards and Learning
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Kindergarten: Informational/Explanatory Writing: Navigating Informational Text Features

Unit Rationale: This unit focuses on informational writing with an emphasis on identifying and using specific text features. Its purpose is for students to identify and use features in informational text to write their own informational pieces that include text features. The text features emphasized in the study of informational reading in kindergarten include the front cover, title page, illustrations or photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents. The culminating assessment of this unit will require students to craft an informational piece.

Prior to writing their own informational piece, students will have opportunities to work with text features. This process improves both comprehension and expressive language while also providing students with opportunities to select important information and integrate it into their writing.

The teacher's modeling of writing strategies, using his/her own writing and thinking aloud about the writing, is crucial to the implementation of this unit. The teacher will serve as an expert writer, who demonstrates drafting, craft, and revision as he or she both models skills and writes along with students.

Through collaboration, analysis of informational texts, and writing, students will develop the world class skills listed in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

<http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/newsroom/Profile-of-the-South-Carolina-Graduate.pdf>

Estimated time frame: two to three weeks.

Standards and Indicators

Targeted implies that these standards are the focus of the unit.

Embedded implies that these standards will be naturally integrated throughout the units.

Targeted Standards/Indicators

Writing

K.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

K.W.2.1 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts that name and supply information about the topic.

K.W.2.2 With guidance and support, plan, revise, and edit, building on personal ideas and the ideas of others to strengthen writing.

Reading-Informational Text

- K.RI.8 Interpret and analyze the author’s use of words, phrases, text features, conventions, and structures, and how their relationships shape meaning and tone in print and multimedia texts.**
- K.RI.8.1 With guidance and support, identify words, phrases, illustrations, and photographs used to provide information.
- K.RI.8.2 With guidance and support, use the front cover, title page, illustrations or photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents to locate and describe key facts or information; describe the relationship between these features and the text.

Embedded Standards/Indicators

Inquiry-Based Literacy

- K.I.2 Transact with texts to formulate questions, propose explanations, and consider alternative views and multiple perspectives.**
- K.I.2.1 Explore topics of interest to formulate logical questions, build knowledge, generate possible explanations, and consider alternative views.
- K.I.3 Construct knowledge, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis.**
- K.I.3.1 Develop a plan of action for collecting relevant information from primary and secondary sources.
- K.I.3.2 Organize and categorize important information; collaborate to validate or revise thinking; report relevant findings.
- K.I.4 Synthesize information to share learning and/or take action.**
- K.I.4.1 Draw logical conclusions from relationships and patterns discovered during the inquiry process.

Communication

- K.C.1 Interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning, and develop logical interpretations through collaborative conversations; build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one’s own views while respecting diverse perspectives.**
- K.C.1.5 Explain personal ideas and build on the ideas of others by responding and relating to comments made in multiple exchanges.
- K.C.2 Articulate ideas, claims, and perspectives in a logical sequence, using information, findings, and credible evidence from sources.**
- K.C.2.1 Recall information from experiences, and gather information from print and multimedia sources; take brief notes from sources, categorize, and organize.

K.C.3 Communicate information through strategic use of multiple modalities and multimedia to enrich understanding when presenting ideas and information.

K.C.3.1 Explore how ideas and topics are depicted in a variety of media and formats.

Clarifying Notes and “I Can” Statements

The lesson format is that of gradual release. The Gradual Release Model is when a teacher models for students as a whole group, has them practice in a small group, and then work independently (Levy, 2007). The modeling portion (I do) is a mini-lesson shown by the teacher and should emphasize how to *think through* the process while demonstrating it. The guided practice (we do) might include the teacher and students’ working together, students’ working in small groups, or both. It is recommended, but not required, that students complete the independent practice (you do) on their own to determine their individual mastery of the “I can” statement (and standard). Naturally, this format is not required, and teachers who choose to use the included lessons or structure should determine which suggestions fit best within the gradual release components (or other instructional method) based on their knowledge of students. <http://www.sjboces.org/doc/Gifted/GradualReleaseResponsibilityJan08.pdf>

The suggested strategies are meant to build students’ ability to write an informational piece through process writing while incorporating reading informational standards and indicators.

The strategies listed within this unit can be taught within Writer’s Workshop. When Writer’s Workshop is integrated with reading, students interpret meaning in a more authentic way. The components of Writer’s Workshop are read aloud/mentor texts, mini-lessons, independent writing, conferring, guided writing, and sharing/publishing.

Teaching Elementary Students to be Effective Writers provides evidence –based recommendations for addressing writing for instructional practices. Those recommendations include the following:

1. Provide daily time for students to write.
2. Teach students the writing process.
3. Teach students to write for a variety of purposes.
4. Teach students to become fluent with handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, and word processing.
5. Create an engaged community of writers. (Institute of Education Sciences, 2012)

For more information: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/writing_pg_062612.pdf

Encourage students to read like a writer and have collaborative conversations through “Turn and Talk.”

Teaching Tips:

- Before you begin, model “turn and talk” with another adult or student. Emphasize the importance of having a two-way conversation with one person speaking at a time. Assign students a “turn and talk” partner or small group.
- During read aloud, stop several times at natural breaking points and pose queries for students to “turn and talk” about, asking the following:
- Where do you think this author got his/her ideas for this book?
- Listen to this! Let me reread the beginning of this book. Did the lead make you want to read the story?
- Did you hear any words that you want to remember and use in your writing?
- Can you picture this setting/character/event in your mind? How did the author help you do that? What words did the author use?
- How did the author make his sentences flow?
- Does this writing have voice? (Routman, 2003)

Reminders:

- Teachers should encourage students to begin using the words “story” and “text” interchangeably.
- Anchor charts are visual references that are used as a tool for students to receive ongoing support as they develop in their understanding. Ideally, anchor charts are made with students and may be displayed as needed.

The Fundamentals of Writing (K-12)

The Fundamentals of Writing provides the classroom structure for a writing community, using a workshop approach. Students learn the recursive process of writing, act as collaborators of writing with their teacher and peers in the writing workshop, produce clear and coherent writing, and incorporate author’s craft techniques in their work. *The Fundamentals of Writing* is designed for students in K-12; therefore, these expectations are on-going for English Language Arts classrooms. You may find *The Fundamentals of Writing* in the SCCR Standards document.

<http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/instruction/standards/ELA/ELA%20Standards/Fundamentals%202015%20Process.pdf>

Shared Writing

Shared writing provides the teacher the opportunity to model the writing process with input from the students. The teacher leads the students through the planning process, adding support as needed. Once a plan has been developed, the teacher will draft, revise, edit and complete the writing, using the ideas of the students. The teacher does the writing and may revise some of the language conventions as he or she writes. During the writing, the teacher may have the students turn and talk to their preassigned writing partner about an idea, which is causing differences of opinion. The group then comes back together to continue the discussion and come to some type of agreement or compromise.

Anchor Charts

Anchor charts are large charts created by the teacher and the students during a whole class or small group mini-lesson. The chart is posted in a prominent place where it becomes a record of the strategies or procedures learned and can be used as a reference. As a reference anchor charts

scaffold students’ thinking, supporting the students as they work, and helping them to become less reliant on the teacher. As additional information is learned, either the teacher or the students can add it to the chart.

Mentor Text (Ray, 2002)

A mentor text should be a text that the students are familiar with from prior experiences. In her book *What You know By Heart*, Katie Wood Ray says that mentor texts become our coaches and our writing teachers. They provide opportunities for students to see what kinds of writers they can become as they imitate the text and continue to find ways to grow. When a student learns to write from a mentor text, the teacher should provide multiple mentor texts. A variety of strategies can be learned from studying more than one author and text. For this reason, more than one possible mentor text is listed in this unit. Teachers can save student examples to be used in the future. Teachers may want to collaborate with grade level colleagues to build a collection of these writings.

“I Can” Statements

“I Can” statements are learning targets of what students need to know and accomplish as related to the standards/indicators.

Writing:

- I can draw, dictate and write an informative/explanatory text that names the topic and supplies information about the topic. (K.W.2.1)
- I can plan, revise, and edit my writing independently or with a partner. (K.W.2.2)

Reading Informational Text:

- I can identify words and phrases used to provide information in a variety of texts. (K.RI.8.1)
- I can identify illustrations and photographs used to provide information in a variety of texts. (K.RI.8.1)
- I can use text features (i.e. front cover, title page, illustrations/photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents) to locate and describe key facts in informational texts. (K.RI.8.2)
- I can describe the relationships among text features (i.e. front cover, title page, illustrations/photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents) and the text. (K.RI.8.2)

Academic Vocabulary

Some students may need extra support with the following academic vocabulary. Teaching vocabulary in an instructional context is recommended rather than teaching in isolation. An appropriate time to deliver explicit instruction would be during the modeling process.

Effective instruction includes the use of formative assessment data to determine student’s vocabulary needs.

compare
text features
illustration

photograph
glossary
table of contents
front cover
title page
font
informative text
topic
revise
edit

Essential Questions

These are **suggested** essential questions that will help guide student inquiry.

- What are the characteristics of informational text?
- How can text features help make meaning when reading informational books?
- What do good writers do to help others learn something new?
- How can good writers make their writing better?

Prior Knowledge

Students should be able to demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
Since the indicators in this unit state “with guidance and support,” prior knowledge related directly to the indicators is not required to teach the unit.

Subsequent Knowledge

In first grade, students are expected to identify illustrations, photographs, words and phrases to provide information about a subject. Students will also use text features, such as the front cover, title page, illustrations/photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents to locate and describe key facts in informational texts and describe the relationships among those text features. Being able to identify those text features assists first grade students in planning, revising, and editing their own informational writing.

Potential Instructional Strategies

Instructional Strategy: Writing about Illustrations and Photographs

Learning Targets:

- **I can identify text features in an informational text. (K.RI.8.1)**
- **I can draw, dictate and write an informative/explanatory text that names the topic and supplies information about the topic. (K.W.2.1)**

Model (I do):

- Select a text with text features that include illustrations/photographs.
- Model for students how to look at the front cover, title page and the illustrations/photographs. Explain that the front cover, title page and photographs or illustrations are called *text features*. The teacher will begin an anchor chart that lists and includes pictures of the appropriate text features introduced in kindergarten (front cover, title page, illustrations/photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents).
- Think aloud and ask, “What in the picture is the same as what’s in the words?” “What’s new?” Model how to use the photographs and illustrations to answer these questions. Now, read the words; then look back at the picture.
- Write the new facts on the [Text Features Chart](#) found in the Appendix.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Select a text with text features such as illustrations or photographs.
- As a shared writing activity, share the pen with the students to write new facts about the topic, using the illustrations and photographs.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Have students work independently or with a partner to select an informational text from their individual book baskets and draw, dictate or write what they have learned from the illustrations or the photographs.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conference, and provide scaffolding as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share items from their writing.

Instructional Strategy: Writing about Glossary and the Table of Contents

Learning Targets:

- **I can identify text features in an informational text. (K.RI.8.1);**
- **I can draw, dictate and write an informative/explanatory text that names the topic and supplies information about the topic. (K.W.2.1)**

Model (I do):

- Select a text with text features that include a glossary and a table of contents.
- Review the text features chart that was started in the previous lesson and add *table of contents* and *glossary*. Include pictures to aid students.
- Model for students how to get information from the table of contents and the glossary.
- Write any new information on a large text features pictorial chart.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Select a text that has a glossary and a table of contents.
- Support students as they look at the table of contents and the glossary to determine new information about the topic.
- As a shared writing activity, share the pen with the students to write new facts about the topic.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Students will work independently or with a partner to select an informational text from their individual book baskets and draw, dictate or write what they have learned from any text features.
- The teacher will conduct independent writing conferences. The teacher will document the results of the conference and provide scaffolding as needed.
- Bring the students together in large group to share items from their writing.

Instructional Strategy: Using Words and Phrases for Information**Learning Targets:**

- **I can identify words and phrases used to provide information in a variety of texts. (K.RI.8.1)**
- **I can draw, dictate and write an informative/explanatory text that names the topic and supplies information about the topic. (K.W.2.1)**

Note:

Use the [Topic and Facts Handout](#) found in the Appendix.

Model (I do):

- Select an informational text that has key words and details for kindergarten students.
- Review the text features chart that was started in the previous lessons.
- Model for students how to get information by looking at specific words (bold words, italics or headings)

- Write any new information on a large text features pictorial chart.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Select a text with text features that have key words and details for kindergarten students.
- Support students as they look for specific words and phrases to determine new information about the topic.
- As a shared writing activity, share the pen with the students to write new facts about the topic.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Have students work independently or with a partner to select an informational text from their individual book baskets and draw, dictate or write what they have learned from the words and phrases.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conference, and provide scaffolding as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share items from their writing.

Instructional Strategy: Informational Writing Topic List

Learning Target: I can plan, revise, and edit my writing with a partner or independently. (K.W 2.2)

Model (I do):

- Review the text features chart.
- Explain that good writers plan their writing before they write. They make a list of thing they want to know more about.
- On a large piece of paper, use think-alouds to model making a list of possible topics.

Guided Practice: (We do)

- As a shared writing experience, have the students share the pen to add drawings or words to a class topic list.

Independent Practice: (You do)

- Give students their own informational topic lists.
- As an independent writing activity, have students create their own informational writing topic lists through drawing, dictating or writing.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conference, and provide scaffolding as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share items from their topic lists.

Instructional Strategy: Planning my Writing

Learning Targets:

- **I can plan, revise, and edit my writing independently or with a partner. (K.W.2.2)**
- **I can describe the relationship between text features (i.e. front cover, title page, illustrations/photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents) and the text. (K.RI.8.2)**

Model (I do):

- Use your informational topic list to choose a topic.
- Model how to choose an informational book to gain information and show the relationships among the text features.
- Model how to plan writing an informational piece by using the planning document (in the Resources section).
- Explain that good writers plan before they write to help them write better.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Choose a topic for the students to guide them through the planning part of the writing process.
- Then choose another informational book to guide the students through planning.
- Have students turn and talk with a partner during the process.
- Conduct a shared writing experience with the students on planning informational writing.

Independent Practice (You do):

- Give each student a copy of the graphic organizer, and have each student draw, dictate or write to plan their writing. Those students who finish their planning may move on to drafting.
- Conduct independent writing conferences; document the results of the conference, and provide scaffolding as needed.
- Bring the students together in a large group to share items from their planning.

Instructional Strategy: From Planning to Drafting

Learning Target: I can draw, dictate and write an informative/explanatory text that names the topic and supplies information about the topic. (K.W.2.1)

Model (I do):

- The teacher will revisit his/her chart with the graphic organizer created in a previous lesson (planning organizer).
- The teacher will model how to move from planning to drafting by thinking aloud in front of the children.
- The teacher will write accordingly, including text features throughout the drafting phase.
- The teacher will model and teach how to re-read as he/she writes.

Guided Practice (We do):

- Choose student writing as a mentor text to read aloud to the students.
- As a shared writing experience, work with the students to use the anchor chart of concept words to write about the class's favorite pet (planned and outlined from the previous lesson).

Independent Practice (You do):

- Students will write independently.
- Students will draw, dictate or write an informational piece in book form (4-6 page book with room for a front cover, title page, table of contents, illustrations and a glossary).
- Students who have finished drafting can then move on to editing and revising if these skills have been previously taught.
- The teacher will conduct independent writing conferences, document the results of the conference, and provide scaffolding as needed.
- The teacher will bring the students together in a large group to discuss their writing.

Note: This process will take several days of mini-lessons to complete.

Instructional Strategy: Editing My Writing or Using a Writer's Checklist

Learning Target: I can plan, revise, and edit my writing independently or with a partner. (K.W.2.2)

Note: The use of this strategy could take place over multiple days.

Preparation: Locate a previously written teacher piece; ensure that students have opinion pieces they have previously written; prepare an anchor chart; prepare a sample kindergarten opinion piece that needs to be edited.

Use the [Writer's Checklist](#) found in the Appendix.

Model (I do):

- Show the students an informational piece you have written (with items left off so that editing will be easier).
- Explain that good writers check their writing to make sure it looks and sounds right before they are finished and ready to publish. Good writers re-read their stories and look for things to correct.
- Show the students a piece of writing that you have previously written.
- Then show students the blank Writer's Checklist. Suggested items on a Writer's Checklist are included in the Resources section.
- Re-read the writing. After reading it again, model how to edit, looking for sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and neatness. Choose one to three items to place on the checklist*.

* Each of these items on the Writer's Checklist will need to be taught separately in subsequent lessons.

Guided Practice (We do):

- The teacher will show a sample piece of writing.
- Using the Writer's Checklist, the teacher and the students will edit the writing together.

Independent Practice (You do):

- The students will work independently to edit their informational books pieces from this unit.
- The teacher will conduct writing mini-conferences with several students to assess their ability to edit their writing.
- The teacher will document the results of the conference and provide scaffolding as needed.
- The teacher will bring the students together in a large group and have some students share their writing.

Potential Assessment Tasks

Summative Assessment:

Have students write an informational booklet on a “how-to” topic. The booklet should contain a front cover, title page, table of contents, illustrations and a glossary. Use an informational writing rubric to assess and score students’ writing. Read several “how-to” books to help students gain an understanding of the structure of a “how-to” text. Suggested mentor texts are located in the Resources section. Assess students using the [Kindergarten Informational Writing Rubric](#) found in the Appendix.

Formative Assessments:

(K.RI.8.1 and K.RI.8.2):

- Show me the... front cover, title page, illustrations/photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents
- Identify the ... front cover, title page, illustrations/photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents
- Open your book to the... front cover, title page, illustrations/photographs, fonts, glossary, and table of contents.
- How would you hold this book to read it to the class?
- Can you identify the different parts of this book?
- Draw, dictate and write an informative/explanatory text that names and supplies information about the topic.

Resources

Booksource (2012). Units of Study for Reading and Writing: Teaching Writing Collections for Grades K-8. Retrieved from http://www.booksource.com/files/Lucy_UnitsofStudy.pdf

WritingFix: Quality Teaching Resources for K-12.
<http://writingfix.com/index.htm>

Non-Fiction Text Features
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2D0Mn3LddAU>

Text Features Kindergarten
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-dBuzE1-qM>

Mentor Texts for How-To Writing:

- *How a House Is Built* by Gail Gibbons
- *The Bicycle Book* by Gail Gibbons
- *Make a Valentine* by Dale Gordon
- *How to Make Salsa* by Jamie Lucero
- *Let's Make Pancakes* by Emma Rossi
- *Milkshake* by Rachel Griffiths and Margaret Clyne
- *Making Spaghetti* by Sara O'Neil
- *Making Pizza* by Jack Hastings
- *The Sandcastle* by Jill McDougall
- *Fruit Salad* by Jill McDougall
- *Making Ice Cream* by Jill McDougall
- *Planning a Birthday Party* by Faye Bolton
- *How to Lose Your All Your Friends* by Nancy Carlson
- *How to Make a Mud Pie* by Deborah Eaton
- *Washing the Dog* by Peter Sloan & Sheryl Sloan

Mentor Texts for All About Books:

- *Dogs* by Gail Gibbons
- *All About Honeybees* by Michele Dufresne
- *All About Sharks* by Jim Arnosky
- *Dolphins* Mondo Publishing
- *Bears* by Tracey Crawford
- *Fish* by Tracey Crawford
- *Frogs* by Tracey Crawford
- *Surprising Sharks* by Nicola Davies
- *All Kinds of Habitats* by Sally Hewitt
- *Chameleons Are Cool* by Martin Jenkins
- *The ABC's of Habitats* by Bobbie Kalman
- *Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs!* by Kathleen Kudlinski
- *What Is Weather?* by Ellen Lawrence
- *Fruits* by Charlotte Guillian

- *Tigers* by Joann Early Macken
- *Squirrels* by Emily Rose Townsend
- *Tell Me, Tree: All About Trees For Kids* by Gail Gibbons

Informational Writing Rubric Kindergarten

SCORE	4 Exceeds	3 Meets	2 Develops	1 Begins
Focus/Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds with all statements related to the prompt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds with all statements, phrases, and/or drawing(s) related to the prompt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds with most statements, phrases, and/or drawing(s) related to the prompt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds with some or no statements, phrases, and/or drawing(s) related to the prompt
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies topic in introductory sentence Supplies some facts about the topic Provides some sense of closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies topic about which they are writing Supplies some information about the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies topic about which they are writing in a student-dictated phrase or sentence Attempts to supply some information but may be unrelated to topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies opinion in drawing(s) or not at all Supplies no information about topic
Language- Conventions of Grammar and Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prints all upper and lower case letters correctly Demonstrates mastery of proper spacing between all words and word placement on the lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prints many upper and lower case letters correctly Demonstrates proficiency of proper spacing between most words and word placement on the lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prints some upper and lower case letters correctly Demonstrates some proficiency of proper spacing between words and word placement on the lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prints few upper and lower case letters correctly Demonstrates little to no proficiency of proper spacing between words and word placement on the lines
Language – Conventions of Capitalization, Punctuation, and Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalizes correctly and consistently with no errors: first word in a sentence, “I,” and proper nouns Uses end punctuation correctly Uses conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns Spells irregular and/or high-frequency words correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalizes correctly and consistently with a minor error: first word in a sentence and the pronoun “I” Uses end punctuation Writes letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds Spells simple words phonetically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalizes correctly and consistently with some errors: first word in a sentence and the pronoun “I” Uses end punctuation incorrectly Inconsistently writes letters for consonant and short-vowel sounds Spells some simple words phonetically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalizes incorrectly with many errors Does not use end punctuation Writes letters with little to no sound/spelling correspondence of consonants and short vowels Spells few to no simple words phonetically

Adapted from Elk Grove Unified School District in Elk Grove, California

Text Features: What Did I Learn?















Title of Book/Front Cover	
Table of Contents	
Illustrations Photographs	
Glossary	

Topic and Facts

Topic:

Fact #1:	Fact #2:	Fact #3:

Writer's Checklist

I have a capital letter at the beginning of my sentences.		
I have a . ! ? at the end of my sentences.		
I wrote neatly and used my best handwriting.		
My story is in order.		
My story makes sense.		
There are spaces between my words.		
I have text features (front cover, title pages, table of contents, illustrations and a glossary)		

Kindergarten Informational/Explanatory Writing: Navigating Informational Text Features References

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